

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T CAIRO 0979

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, EG

SUBJ: ALLEGED SOMALI SUGGESTION OF CONFEDERATION WITH EHTIOPIA
AND SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN RED SEA AREA

REF: CAIRO 0677

1. AS DEPT WILL RECALL, FAHMY RECENTLY SPOKE OF A SOMALI SUGGESTION TO ETHIOPIA FOR SOME KIND OF UNITY AND CONTENTED THIS WAS SOVIET INSPIRED. IN A TALK WITH VP MOBAREK TODAY, HE STATED THIS INFORMATION HAD FIRST BEEN GIVEN HIM BY THE ETHIOPIAN HEAD OF STATE DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO ADDIS.

2. ACCORDING TO MOBAREK, THE SOMALIS HAD SUBMITTED A WRITTEN PROPOSAL SUGGESTING A CONFEDERATION BETWEEN THE TWO STATES. GIVEN THE LONG-STANDING STRAINS BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA, AND THE FACT THAT THE SOMALIS HAVE RECENTLY AGAIN BEGUN ARMED INCURSIONS INTO SOUTHER ETHIOPIA, THE PROPOSAL HAD COME AS A SURPRISE. THE ETHIOPIANS HAD ASKED VP MOBAREK FOR GOE'S VIEWS. MOBAREK CLAIMED THAT HE HAD WARNED THE ETHIOPIANS AGAINST ACCEPTING SUCH A
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PROPOSAL. IN HIS VIEW, IT COULD ONLY BE SOVIET

INSPIRED AND REPRESENTS A COVERT SOVIET EFFORT TO PENETRATE ETHIOPIA THROUGH SOMALIA. AT THE RECENT OAU CONFERENCE, THE SOMALI FORMIN HAD ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE SOVIETS QUOTE HAVE THEIR HANDS AROUND SOMALIA'S NECK UNQUOTE. THE ETHIOPIANS HAVE SENT NO FORMAL REPLY, BUT SIMPLY INDICATED THEY WILL STUDY THE PROPOSAL.

3. IN MENTIONING ABOVE, MOBAREK EXPRESSED KEEN CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA. THESE MUST BE RESISTED. SHOULD SOVIET INFLUENCE ALSO DEVELOP IN ETHIOPIA, THE SUDAN WILL INEVITABLY FOLLOW SOON THEREAFTER. SOMALIA IS ALREADY PRESSING FOR INCORPORATION OF DJIBUTI, WHICH IN THE GOE VIEW WOULD GIVE THE SOVIETS AN ADDITIONAL STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT POSITION AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE RED SEA. FOLLOWING HIS REPORT TO PRESIDENT SADAT, THE PRESIDENT HAD SENT A MESSAGE TO KING KHALID URGING SAG TO ASSIST ETHIOPIA TO RESIST SUCH SOVIET INSPIRED BLANDISHMENTS. SADAT HAD ALSO MENTIONED THE SUBJECT TO KAMAL ADHAM DURING THE LATTER'S RECENT VISIT. MOBAREK EXPECTS THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL AGAIN RAISE IT WHEN HE VISITS SAUDI ARABIA ON FEB 21.

4. COMMENT: MOBAREK'S FERVENT EXPRESSION OF CONCERN ABOUT THE DANGER OF SOVIET INFLUENCE PENETRATING INTO THE RED SEA AREA REMINDS ME OF THE RECURRING SAUDI THEME TO THAT EFFECT IN THE LATE 60'S. AT THAT TIME THE EGYPTIANS WERE DOING THEIR PART IN ASSISTING THE SPREAD OF SOVIET INFLUENCE. TIMES DO CHANGE.
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